

SBC love feast results as squabbles subside

by Robert O'Brien

More than 13,500 Southern Baptists holstered months of theological rhetoric, modified a two-year turn to the right, vigorously affirmed the Bible as their authoritative guide and sounded a renewed charge toward Bold Mission Thrust at a three-day meeting at L.A. Convention Center.

The 13,594 messengers to the 124th annual Southern Baptist Convention—far surpassing the west coast record of 9396 set in 1962 in San Francisco—avoided overt theological confrontation, although it underlaid the politics and business of the convention.

Bailey Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., won reelection to a traditional second term as SBC president with some 60 percent of the vote, defeating Abner McCall, chancellor of Baylor University, Waco, Tex.

So-called "moderates," unhappy over efforts of "biblical inerrantists" to control the SBC, launched the challenge of Smith, losing the election but winning more votes than most convention observers predicted.

In a convention marked by efforts of Smith and other SBC leaders to set the stage for harmony, messengers voted a record \$93 million Cooperative Program budget, magnified the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust goal to proclaim Christ to the world by the year 2000, heard a host of inspirational messages and reports by SBC agencies and passed 18 resolutions.

Messengers voted for the fourth consecutive year to reaffirm the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement, declaring the Bible is "truth without any mixture of error" upon the motion of former SBC president Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City with the open endorsement by president Smith.

While messengers turned down recommendations to enlarge a committee on resolutions and reduce the appointment powers of the president, they accepted challenges to the report of a committee on boards, replacing five persons recommended by the committee for trustee slates of various agencies.

In presenting his motion Hobbs quoted from 2 Tim. 3:16, explaining that the original Greek which says "all Scripture is inspired by God . . ." means every part of the whole is "God-breathed."

Former SBC president Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn. successfully urged that Hobbs' comments interpreting the action be recorded in the convention minutes as part of the official record.

In response to a question president Smith said he saw no conflict between Hobbs' motion and the SBC's 1980 doctrinal integrity resolution which "exhorted" SBC seminaries and agencies to employ only persons "who believe in the divine inspiration of the whole

Bible, infallibility of the original manuscripts and that the Bible is truth without any mixture of error."

However, Hobbs pointed out that a resolution is an expression of the viewpoint of the messengers at that particular annual session and is not binding on succeeding conventions like a motion.

Hobbs' motion also emphasized "our belief in" the 1963 statement, "including all 17 articles, plus the preamble, which protects the conscience of the individual and guards us from a creedal faith."

In the presidential address and post-election news conference Smith declared the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message statement is the strongest statement Southern Baptists need to make about the Bible.

Messengers also elected Christine Gregory, immediate past national president of Woman's Missionary Union, as first vice president in a run-off with Stan Coffey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N. M. Mrs. Gregory, of Danville, Va., was nominated by Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., and Coffey was nominated by James Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Tex.

Don Kim, pastor of Korean-speaking Berendo Street Baptist Church, Los Angeles, was elected second vice president in a run-off with James H. Morton, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Livermore, Cal.

In other business messengers spoke to a wide range of public issues, adopting resolutions denouncing the Equal Rights Amendment, secular humanism and anti-Semitism while upholding religious liberty and the need for both peace and a strong national defense.

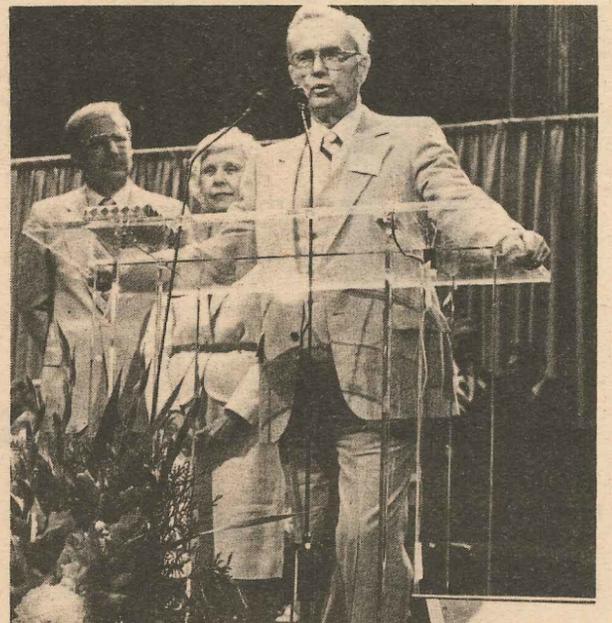
Other resolutions expressed opposition to a proposal in Congress to change the national election day from Tuesday to Sunday and urged congressional approval of bills to prohibit advertising of and to require warning labels on alcoholic beverages.

Other resolutions condemned providing contraceptives to minors without parental consent, poor television programming, pornography and violence in the cities.

Among those which provoked spirited, although courteous, debate were the resolutions reaffirming opposition to ERA and denial of birth control information and devices to teenagers. Another reaffirmed Southern Baptists' traditional support for separation of church and state while taking a swipe at the religious right and opposing tuition tax credits.

Notable for their absence this year were proposals on abortion and prayer in public schools, two subjects which in recent conventions have provoked heated debate. Also expected but not presented was a resolution on teaching "creationism" in public schools.

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Duke McCall addresses the messengers as Mrs. McCall and SBC president Bailey Smith look on.

Duke McCall will step down from seminary presidency

Duke K. McCall, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1951, has announced his retirement "as soon as my successor can be elected."

The surprise announcement came during the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Los Angeles. McCall said the burdens of seminary presidency and of the Baptist World Alliance, of which he was elected president in 1980, had become too much. He set his final working date as Dec. 31, 1981, unless a successor is on the job earlier.

Wayne Dehoney, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, and chairman of the seminary's 62-member board of trustees, said trustees have named McCall the school's first chancellor. This will be an unsalaried position effective upon the election of a new president.

McCall will continue to serve until 1985 as president of the 30-million member Baptist World Alliance. Dehoney termed this "a unique leadership role in the world family of Baptists." He said McCall would extend "the international ministry of Southern Seminary through his role as chancellor in developing new opportunities for world outreach by the seminary's faculty and alumni."

McCall's 30-year tenure as chief executive is the longest in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention's oldest institution. Of seven presidents since the seminary's founding in 1859, only the 29-year service of E. Y. Mullins (1899-1928) approaches McCall's record. Mullins was also elected president of the Baptist World Alliance while serving as Southern Seminary president.

As chancellor, McCall would represent the seminary at the request of the new president in a variety of ways, Dehoney said. He termed McCall "the foremost Baptist leader of his generation, uniquely equipped to serve the denomination as a senior statesman in this country and around the world, building bridges of friendship and cooperation between fellow believers."

During Southern Seminary's annual SBC luncheon, at which McCall made his announcement to 1300 guests, J. Altus Newell, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville, was installed as 1981-82 alumni president. He succeeds R. Gene Puckett of Silver Spring, Md. James C. Cammack, pastor of Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, Fayetteville, N. C., was named president-elect, to succeed Newell in 1982-83.

Puckett presented Alumni of the Year citations to John J. Hamilton, campus minister and pastor of University Baptist Church, Ames, Iowa; Weldon E. Marcum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Miami, Okla.; and Harold K. Graves, emeritus president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Cal.



Earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. — Jude 3

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C. R. Daley

Daley Observations

The process works when people let it work

A veteran observer summed up the 1981 Southern Baptist Convention in these words, "The process works." If five words be added to these three, it would be a more complete summation. "The process works when people let it work."

This process includes divesting leadership and human efforts. Never underestimates the power of prayer nor the determination of Southern Baptists not to be divided on the essentials and not to be detracted from their sense of purpose. Never was so much prayer lifted and never were more human efforts made for a harmonious meeting of the convention.

The extraordinary amount of prayer did not so much convince God who has always wanted to bless Southern Baptists as it changed those praying from feuding factions into loving and harmonious spirits. From the outset of the pre-convention meetings there were signs that messengers this year did not want a repeat of Houston and St. Louis. And so what was billed as a shoot-out in Los Angeles became a Southern Baptist love feast.

Everybody seemed to want to outdo everybody else in bringing about healing and harmony. Among the noticeable which contributed to harmony were:

- A non-inflammatory pastor's conference thanks to Jim Henry and the speakers he chose.
- The restoral by the Committee on Boards of three agency board members who were eligible in the earlier committee report.
- The withdrawal of a controversial constitutional change proposed by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.
- The decision by messengers not to attack the Christian Life Commission nor to subject the teachers to stricter doctrinal tests.
- The repeated pleas of speaker after speaker for unity and harmony.

All these contributed significantly to the Los Angeles healing experience but most credit has to go to president Bailey Smith. The outcome in Los Angeles was clearly in the hands of Smith and he rose to the occasion. He demonstrated denominational statesmanship not only in presiding but in behind-the-scenes efforts for reconciliation.

Hardly enough can be said for Smith. Appealed to through the past year to be healing and reconciling president, he responded magnificently and if he does as well the coming year, he will go down as a Southern Baptist hero.

With such a commendable performance some may wonder why he was challenged for a second term as president. The answer is that he is

associated in the minds of many with a move to impose a strict creedal statement upon all Southern Baptists. This, along with the stature of Abner McCall, accounts for the strong 40 percent McCall vote. The vote, then, was not as much a repudiation of Smith as it was a rejection of creedalism.

Both the 40 percent vote for McCall and the 60 percent vote for Smith had messages. The strong McCall vote delivered a message to would-be creedalists. The message is Southern Baptists will stand for no creed but the Bible. The 60 percent vote for Smith said that Southern Baptists believe in an infallible Bible and they don't understand when any seminary teacher or denominational leader has to qualify or explain his or her view on infallibility of scripture.

Considering all the preconvention predictions of a showdown in Los Angeles between warring factions of Southern Baptists, the first question of many Baptists not in Los Angeles is: "Who won, the ultra-conservatives or the moderates?"

The answer is: "Neither party won." The convention won because people of good will toward each other refused to fight. The Lord won and so did Bold Mission Thrust and world evangelization.

Another question in the minds of those concerned for the future of Southern Baptists is whether the outcome in Los Angeles is a "return to normalcy" which will last for several years or merely a truce until sides can regroup and plan strategy for New Orleans in 1982. This is a critical question because, as former convention president Jimmy Allen observed, the rhetoric of unity is easier than the reality of unity. The burden of Southern Baptists' prayers between now and next June should be that the rhetoric of Los Angeles will be a reality in New Orleans.

The Southern Baptist process does work when people of good will let it work. Genuine healing is a permanent cure and not a scab over a persisting infection.

Let us pray!

What happened on Wednesday in L.A.

The talk of the messengers in Los Angeles and the talk for years to come will be what happened to the Committee on Boards report on Wednesday. Ordinarily this report which includes nominees for board members of all Southern Baptist Convention agencies is approved routinely but this year it was successfully challenged for the first time in the memory of most messengers.

Under the circumstances the challenge was not surprising. The committee report actually invited the challenge but few expected it to be successful.

Here's the way it happened. In the first report

of the Committee on Boards released before the convention 10 persons eligible to be renominated for second terms as directors of convention agencies were replaced with new nominees. (Ordinarily eligible incumbents are routinely renominated.) Three of these 10 incumbents for various reasons did not want to be renominated but the other seven were willing to serve.

Because of protests after the release of the report and after considering additional information a subcommittee of the Committee on Boards meeting in Los Angeles restored three of the seven who had been bumped but left the remaining four off. It was at this point the first challenge came. A motion was made to restore the four who had not been renominated. After spirited debate the messengers sided with the challenge and restored the four.

Two of these four were Kentuckians: Ben Elrod, Georgetown College president, and William Ray, Severns Valley Baptist Church's minister of education.

The other challenge involved another Kentuckian. Robert Parker, a Louisville pastor, was the official committee nominee for membership on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee which functions for the convention between its annual sessions. Parker's qualifications for such service were questioned and the messengers chose Eldred Taylor over Parker.

What's to be made of such unprecedented action by the messengers? It says the Committee on Boards must always be fair and responsible in its nominations. Members of the committee must ask each other more questions about their recommendations instead of automatically endorsing each other's nominees. The committee must also be careful in not using its power to promote one doctrinal stance.

The rejection of the committee's official recommendation had at least one unfortunate consequence in Kentucky. It left men high and dry who ordinarily would have been chosen. In the case of Elrod's and Ray's restorations it was on principle and precedents concerning incumbents and not on the basis of lack of qualifications of the committee's nominees.

In the case of Parker the challenge was not on a personal basis but on his record of limited participation and contribution in denominational life and service. Only a fraction of the messengers who chose Taylor over Parker knew of Parker's doctrinal stance or of his leadership in Moral Majority.

On the other hand, the rejection of the committee recommendations in the case of Kentucky was in keeping with fairness and impartiality. Ben Elrod and Bill Ray are qualified in every way and to have renominated about 100 other incumbents and "bump" Elrod and Ray can be only considered unfair and undeserved.

Let us learn from that unfortunate incident, put it behind us and harbor no ill will.

Convention impressions

by James H. Cox, Associate Editor

Los Angeles: This reporter felt the city did not appear nearly as large as he had been led to believe. By contrast, among cities hosting the SBC in recent years, Houston's interstates seemed far more congested. One thing was all too obvious to the naked eye in LA, however—smog. While temperatures soared into the nineties, the air above was so thick you could cut it with a knife. There were other distinctives about this convention city. It was the first one in which we were advised not to venture off the beaten path for fear of being mugged, and to move in groups, even in the daytime. A tour bus driver's caution to departing passengers at the famous Chinese Theater was sound: "Keep one hand on your camera and one hand on your wallet at all times." LA had its share of blighted areas all right, but the native foliage of landscaped parks and growing wild along rugged hillsides was perfectly beautiful.

Accommodations/restaurants: Once more we say what we have said unequivocally in previous years—never have so many paid so much for so little. The trend toward unjustified prices and deteriorating service in many places was never more evident to SBC messengers than in LA. While some few found close-in rooms for under \$40 per night, they usually forfeited efficiency in dining rooms and at front desks as a result. Major convention hotels offered rooms in the \$55-\$85 range and were booked solid with SBC messengers. Restaurant prices were commensurate with overinflated room rates. A small buffet in convention headquarters hotel, for which one would expect to pay \$3.50-\$5.50 in Kentucky, was \$11.40. Menus in some restaurants started at about \$10 for dinner and went to \$25 or more. While the few eating establishments near the convention center were strangely understaffed and therefore unequipped to handle a convention crowd, the help that was there appeared willing to serve as best it could. One waiter observed: "The Southern Baptists are multiplying faster than Jesus broke the loaves and the fishes."

Street scenes: Well dressed couples of every age strolling hand-in-hand to or from the convention center . . . A Negro youth, perhaps in his early twenties, asleep on a sidewalk at midday . . . Neon signs atop a 20-story church building reading "Jesus Saves" . . . Courteous drivers waiting to make turns as messengers crossed at intersections . . . Teenagers pressed into service by Bill Powell to distribute his Southern Baptist Journal to messengers leaving the convention hall . . . Pornographic tabloids, almost too shockingly vivid to believe, encased in newspaper boxes at every major downtown intersection . . . A city of lovely fountains, with multicolored lights on them at night . . . Enough Stalenecker buses to start a transit company . . . Famous street monickers—Hollywood and Vine, Santa Monica Boulevard, Sunset Strip, etc. . . . Fire trucks answering false alarms at the Holiday Inn and Hilton . . . Plastic Baptist Book Store tote bags bearing books and gifts for libraries and friends back home . . . Young men preaching to the preachers outside the convention hall, often ending in shouting matches between participants . . . An ethnic melting pot, as Vietnamese, Chinese, Mexicans, Americans and peoples of every nationality merge on the streets of this great port of entry to the U. S. and freedom.

A funny thing happened: The ballots the messengers use in voting are numbered consecutively. Each time a vote is taken the number of the ballot must correspond to the one called for from the platform or the computer tabulating the vote will toss that ballot out. Irrespective of this, one messenger, knowing the larger issues would come last and realizing everybody had a rapidly diminishing supply of ballots, was overheard to say: "I'm saving all mine for the end so I'll have something to vote on!"

Unsung hero: As far as we are concerned, the human element most deserving of credit for the decorum in the meeting hall is convention registration secretary Lee Porter of Nashville. His pleas before announcing the outcome of controversial votes obviously thwarted those who, in two previous conventions, had applauded, cheered, whistled, booed, hissed, hooted, howled and stomped. The silence was deafening and the turn of events was so unexpected, hundreds were caught by surprise. Porter may be credited with setting in motion the spirit of togetherness experienced this year by the messengers, and we felt God working through him.

Executive Committee nominee from state replaced by SBC

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention overwhelmingly approved a revised report of their committee on boards after accepting two floor amendments substituting five nominees.

The official action culminated a controversy which began earlier in the year when the committee, which suggests nominees for SBC agency trustee posts, bumped the names of 10 persons eligible for second four-year terms.

Messengers upheld a substitute motion by Ken Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Tex., by a vote of 3571 (52.68 percent) to 3089 (45.57 percent) to restore four of those bumped.

Then they approved a motion by T. L. McSwain of Louisville, pastor of Hurstbourne Baptist Church, to replace Robert Parker, pastor of Louisville's Kosmosdale Baptist Church, as one of the nominees for the SBC Executive Committee, with Eldred Taylor, pastor of First Baptist Church, Somerset, Ky. That vote recorded 4075 (53.72 percent) for the motion and 3448 against (45.45 percent).

Arguments on the Chafin motion revolved around the question of which "traditional approach" would be followed. Traditionally, messengers have not challenged the committee's nominees from the floor, and traditionally the committee has not bumped names of those eligible and qualified for a second traditional term.

The result of Chafin's amendment returned Adon C. Taft of Miami, Fla., and Mrs. James S. Potter of Charlotte, N. C., to the trustee slate of the SBC Home Mission Board in place of Richard C. Brackin of Cocoa, Fla., and Mrs. Ronald (Anne) Carter of Greensboro, N. C.; Ben M. Elrod of Georgetown, Ky., to the trustee slate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in place of Thomas M. Atwood of Clinton, Ky.; and William C. Ray of Elizabethtown, Ky., to the trustee slate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in place of William Rowlett of Hopkinsville, Ky.

In an action before the convention began, a subcommittee of the committee on boards restored James M. Auchmuty Jr. of Birmingham, Ala., who protested being bumped, to the trustee slate of the SBC Sunday School Board, and Mrs. Grady (Bettye) Cothen of Nashville, Tenn., to the trustee slate of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

The challenge to Parker was made by McSwain on the basis that he and his church were not actively involved in the affairs of Southern Baptists and gave only about 1.5 percent through the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget for world missions.

McSwain said Taylor's church gave in excess of 28 percent and that Taylor has been deeply involved in Southern Baptist affairs.

Squabbles end, love feast on . . .

[Continued from Page 1]

In action taken in advance of the convention the Executive Committee voted to withdraw a recommendation which would have changed the method for determining the number of messengers a church may have. The recommendation, which would have tied the number of messengers to undesignated or Cooperative Program gifts, had drawn criticism following its adoption by the Executive Committee in February.

Other convention business saw messengers elect William Hull, pastor of First Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., to preach next year's convention sermon and set Atlanta as the 1986 site for the SBC annual meeting.

Messengers also adopted motions to clarify the convention's response to world hunger, heard reports of statistical increases which signal growth in Bold Mission Thrust efforts, and referred several motions for study—including one which would remove Baptist Press, the SBC news service, from the Executive

Committee and give it agency status.

The convention approved on first reading the adoption of two constitutional changes which must also be approved by the 1982 convention.

The first would require at least one of the three convention officers—president, first vice president, second vice president—be a layperson. The second constitutional change would alter the quorum for agency boards from its current nine members to 50 percent of the members of a governing group.

A sermon on Bold Mission Thrust by Jess Moody, pastor of First Baptist Church, Van Nuys, Cal., caught the spirit of the messengers, drawing a standing ovation.

Southern Baptists have a third army—the Bold Missions army—which is bigger than the two groups of Baptists pushing and shoving this convention, he declared. Moody characterized the "third army" as 95 percent of Southern Baptists and urged Baptists to stop feuding and start finishing and not let any moderate or conservative pastor's interpretation (of the Bible) become another man's law.

Carroll Hubbard Sr. dies

Carroll Hubbard Sr., 70, a long time Kentucky Baptist leader, died in a Louisville hospital on June 11 following a heart attack. Following long pastorates in Kentucky and Tennessee, Hubbard served on the staff of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce Bible School. Memorial services were conducted in Louisville on June 15. More details and an editorial treatment will appear in the June 24 issue of Western Recorder.

Bratcher resigns ABS

Robert G. Bratcher, a native Kentuckian and well known Bible translator whose remark on biblical inerrancy in April created a furor among Southern Baptists, has resigned as a research associate with the American Bible Society.

In a prepared statement released June 9, the New York based society called Bratcher's comments during an address in Dallas at a Christian Life Commission seminar "ill considered and intemperate."

The statement continued: "The American Bible Society wishes to state that it completely disassociates itself from the remarks made by Bratcher on that occasion," adding Bratcher's remarks "violated one of the Society's basic rules."

That rule, in effect "from the day of its founding 165 years ago to the present moment," dictates the society will not "engage in theological debate nor make comment on the doctrinal positions of the churches and constituencies it seeks impartially to

serve."

Contacted at his Chapel Hill, N. C. home, Bratcher said he will make no comment on his resignation, a move he was reportedly pressured to make.

Although he has worked for the American Bible Society since 1957, Bratcher's entire background is Southern Baptist. He was reared in a missionary home in Brazil, where he later returned to teach from 1946 to 1956 in Baptists' Rio do Janeiro seminary.

State Baptists elected

Kentuckians named to boards and agencies of the convention are as follows:

Executive Committee—Eldred Taylor, Somerset

Foreign Mission Board—Mrs. Carolyn Fitch, Paducah

Annuity Board—David A. Nelson, Owensboro

Southern Seminary—William Wilson, Owensboro; Damon Surgener, Louisville;

Gorman Jones Roberts, Louisville

Southwestern Seminary—Ben M. Elrod, Georgetown

New Orleans Seminary—William C. Ray, Elizabethtown

Midwestern Seminary—Ronald W. Stone, Winchester

Radio & Television Commission—LaVerne Butler, Louisville

Convention Reports

Seminary roundup

Alumni associations of the Southern Baptist seminaries met during the convention in Los Angeles and elected officers for the coming year.

Southeastern Seminary: Paul Craven, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charleston, S. C., president; Calvin S. Metcalf, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, Tenn., president-elect; James G. Stertz Sr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Sarasota, Fla., secretary; and James D. Whetstone, pastor of West Gantt Baptist Church, Greenville, S. C., director.

Golden Gate Seminary: Clyde B. Skidmore, Bakersfield, Cal., president; and Wayne Reynolds, Sacramento, Cal., president-elect.

Midwestern Seminary: John Goodwin, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La., president; Jerry Barnes, pastor of Leewood Baptist Church, Kansas City, Kan., president-elect.

Southwestern Seminary: Charles Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va., president; Robert O. Feather, vice president for external affairs, Baylor University, vice president/president-elect; and John Earl Seelig, vice president for public affairs, Southwestern Seminary, secretary-treasurer.

Exec officials reelected

Members of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee unanimously reelected their 1980-81 officers to a second one year term.

J. Howard Cobble, pastor of First Baptist Church, Avondale Estates, Ga., was reelected chairman.

Vice chairman is John T. Dunaway, pastor of First Baptist Church, Corbin. Donald I. Gent, a layman from Evansville, Ind., was named secretary.

Harold C. Bennett of Nashville was reelected executive secretary-treasurer.

BFMS affirmed again

For the fourth consecutive year the Southern Baptist Convention voted to reaffirm its 1963 Baptist Faith and Message Statement which declares the Bible is "truth without any mixture of error."

In an apparently unanimous vote more than 10,000 messengers to the convention stood to adopt a motion to reaffirm by Herschel H. Hobbs, retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, who was chairman of the committee which recommended the statement in 1963.

It also reaffirmed "our belief in" the 1963 statement "including all 17 articles plus the preamble which protects the conscience of the individual and guards us from a creedal faith."

Hobbs said he hoped his motion would end once and for all any felt need "to reaffirm every year what we've already stated."

Evangelists: pro-inerrancy

The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists passed a motion affirming the inerrancy of the Bible and elected new officers.

Meeting for a banquet and business session in First Baptist Church about 150 conferees and guests heard newly elected president Freddie Gage of Eules, Tex., say, "Without apologizing, I stand for biblical inerrancy."

Gage, who made the remark near the close of the session, added: "We need to quit apologizing for saying we are friends of Paige Patterson and Judge Paul Pressler." He also thanked conference members for casting their ballots for "Bailey Smith and for biblical inerrancy."

Patterson is president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, Tex., and Pressler, an active Southern Baptist layman, is an appeals court judge from Houston, Tex. Smith, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., was reelected to a second term as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. All are proponents of biblical inerrancy.

Serving with Gage will be Ed Stalneck, Jacksonville, Fla., vice president; Chuck Kennedy, St. Louis, Mo., music director; Lee Castro, Ft. Worth, Tex., assistant music director; and Stan Coffey, pastor of First Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N. M., pastor-advisor.

Smith discusses election

President Bailey Smith said the 1963 statement of Baptist Faith and Message "is the strongest statement" Southern Baptist convention messengers need to make about the Bible.

Smith got more than 60 percent of the vote in a race against Abner V. McCall, chancellor and retired president of Baylor University, Waco, Tex.

"I don't see my election as a victory for any side," Smith declared, in answer to a question about the challenge of "moderates" in the convention who opposed efforts by "ultra-conservatives" to take over the SBC structure.

"I don't believe we have sides," said Smith, who commented Southern Baptists have differing emphases but not differing sides. He said he sees his election as a decision of the convention for love and unity.

Asked what he would do to assure election of a successor next year in New Orleans who is committed to his biblical interpretation, he responded: "I'm not going to do anything regarding a successor."

Smith commented on McCall's strong showing: "I got 51 percent of the vote last year and I got 61 percent this year. Abner McCall got the votes he got because he deserved them. Abner McCall is big league."

Smith reiterated comments made last year that he hopes to be a healer among Southern Baptists and declared, "I sense a healing coming."

"Southern Baptists are unified because they believe we have more in common than we do in difference," he said. "We don't have to agree on everything, but we do have to believe that the hope of the world is Jesus Christ."

He refused to reopen the issue he made famous last year when he declared God does not hear the prayers of Jews. "That has had enough publicity," he said.

"I do believe Israel has a special place in the heart of God," he said in

response to a question about the political situation in the Middle East. But he would not discuss "the complex political questions" involved.

In response to questions about his emphases for the coming year, Smith said he will continue to emphasize winning people to Christ as he has done in the past year.

Smith expressed concern that Southern Baptists escalate efforts to deal with the world hunger problem and "take a more aggressive role in helping blacks" and other racial minorities.

"We must do all possible to end bigotry and prejudice. Our church (First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla.) has had all races for 15 to 20 years. There's only one kind of person—the person for whom Jesus Christ has died," he said.

Smith was asked what could be done to change the trend of churches which have large numbers of baptisms but not much participation in the SBC's Cooperative Program budget for world missions.

"They will just have to do what we have done and repent," he said of efforts by First Southern Baptist Church of Del City to increase Cooperative Program participation.

Asked if he believes emphasis on the word "inerrant" is an important emphasis for Southern Baptists, Smith said he believes the Bible is inerrant and infallible. But he added, "What we don't need is to be rude and use it (the word 'inerrant') as an axe."

"I believe every word of the Bible and wish everyone did," he said. "But I have no plans or agenda to attack anyone," he added in response to a question about what is taught in SBC seminaries.

Recalling the furor caused by Smith's comment about the Jews, a reporter asked if he would be more sensitive in the future to special groups.

"I will be extremely careful," Smith said emphatically.

We must pay the price

Southern Baptists have yet to pay the bill for their Bold Mission goals, said Foreign Mission Board president Keith Parks.

While admitting there were many encouraging signs, Parks said the 13.6 million member denomination's goals of sharing its witness with the entire world by the end of the century will not be reached unless certain changes occur in Baptist individuals and churches.

The Foreign Mission Board has requests for 389 preachers, but only one out of 12 will be filled if the pattern of the previous years prevails, Parks said.

"That is not very bold," Parks emphasized.

After listing ways the FMB could cut back and lower its goals, Parks insisted the denomination could decide to pay the price.

Parks warned that the solution to the problem is not taking more of the convention's Cooperative Program funds and shifting them to foreign missions.

"Our real problem is that Southern Baptists individually and personally are not willing to give sacrificially to fund all the things we are trying to do as Southern Baptists," he said.

In this corner . . .

Biblical inerrancy: Is it a deep theological concern critical to the survival of the Southern Baptist Convention or a "ruthless power grab"?

The question was debated by two Southern Baptist leaders at the annual workshop of the Religious Newswriters Association prior to the 124th meeting of the SBC.

Inerrancy, a theological belief that the original autographs (manuscripts) of the Bible were free from any error, has become a center of controversy within the denomination.

The RNA debate, however, did not deal with whether the Bible is literally true, but had as its topic "Is biblical inerrancy a factor crucial to the survival of the Southern Baptist Convention?"

The debate featured Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, Dallas, Tex., a leader in an effort to commit the SBC to a belief in inerrancy, and Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, a leader of a wing formed to resist plans of the inerrantists.

During the two-hour debate, both men defended the Bible using different terms. Patterson spoke of inerrancy, but Chafin, a former seminary professor, talked in terms of absolute trustworthiness and termed the Bible "the authority" for Baptists.

The strongest exchange between the two men came over the motivations of the inerrancy group, headed by Patterson and Paul Pressler, an appeals court judge from Houston.

Chafin referred to the effort as a "ruthless reach for personal power" while Patterson called it a "theological movement . . . a deep concern" for the future of the denomination and its viability in evangelism and missions.

"The only way in which inerrancy is an issue for the Southern Baptist Convention is that it is a code word of those who have a need to seek to control this denomination, who have a need to undermine the confidence in the institutions we have created," Chafin charged.

Chafin, also dean of the schools of evangelism for the Billy Graham Evangelical Association, predicted the movement will be rejected by Southern Baptists "when the issues are clear" and the SBC is again representative, rather than "stacked" with inerrantists as he claims the Houston (1979) and St. Louis (1980) conventions were.

Patterson noted the charges as "somewhat unusual" because he has not called for the dismissal of anyone, nor for a narrow creedal statement, nor for the jettisoning of any seminary professor with whom he does not agree.

"I have entered this because of a deep theological concern that when you begin to lose your theology, you lose your impact."

"We want to see a reaffirmation of our faith in the Bible so our denomination can remain viable with the real message of Jesus Christ to the world."

Patterson and Chafin collided over what is being taught in seminaries, although Patterson did not extensively cite works by Southern Baptist professors, something he has done in prior presentations.

He commented: "According to the Gallup Poll, 85 to 90 percent of our

teachers in the institutions and leaders in the agencies should be devoted to that.

"What goes on in the seminaries ought to be representative of what is happening in the churches," he said.

Chafin, chairman of trustees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Tex., said: "We do not have a board, a committee, an agency or a seminary where the authority of the Scripture is questioned.

"Baptists have always given the Bible the place of authority. This does not mean there is total agreement among Southern Baptists about the Bible. There are different views . . . all part of the 'soul freedom' to interpret (the scriptures) in light of our best understanding. This diversity is our strength, not our weakness."

Sunbeam to president

Dorothy Elliott Sample was the first to admit being national president of the 1.1 million member Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union is a long way from being a member of a Sunbeam Band in Brilliant, Ala.

But it was as a Sunbeam, the organizational predecessor of the WMU sponsored children's group of Mission Friends, where Mrs. Sample first recalls being touched by missions.

"I remember it was a summer missionary who first challenged me to memorize Bible verses. I felt then when I grew up I wanted to be a missionary like that girl," the Michigan leader of the women's auxiliary recalled.

Mrs. Sample sees her election to the presidency of WMU as the fulfillment of that early commitment at the Boston Baptist Church in rural Marion County, Ala.

Today, the former Alabama Sunbeam is a professional psychological counselor and educator in Flint.

Her election as the 13th president of WMU marks the first time the SBC auxiliary has gone outside the traditional geographic area of Southern Baptist work to tap its highest elected officer.

Her predecessor was Mrs. Christine Gregory of Danville, Va., who stepped down after serving six years.

Mrs. Sample said it would be part of her role as WMU leader to challenge Baptist women to accept themselves and their abilities to become involved in missions.

"I would like to stir up the gifts God has given to women," she said, explaining a focus on mission study would be a good way to achieve this goal.

Her message of challenge to women reflected her training as a psychologist and her strong commitment to missions. She blamed the failure of some to become involved in missions on what she calls a psychological "Jonah Complex."

"As individuals, we actually fear our potential," she explained. "But it will be the realization of that potential that will enable Baptists to realize the goals of Bold Mission Thrust."

Pastors avoid politics

Setting a moderate tone for the Southern Baptist Convention to follow, the Southern Baptist Pastor's Conference

avoided confrontation on the biblical inerrancy question, focusing instead on the Christian home, evangelism and missions.

More than 7000 pastors and their wives listened to 15 sermons and seven testimonies and elected a Houston pastor, Edwin Young of Second Baptist Church, as president.

This year's president, Jim Henry of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., said the program was planned to bring pastors together. He commended the "sweet spirit of togetherness" among the pastors who attended and spoke.

Henry specifically mentioned the testimonies of the convention's six seminary presidents, saying he felt good about their testimonies, and the presidents felt good about the invitation.

Henry commended the speakers for sticking to their assigned topics and avoiding political issues that might set the agenda for the 124th annual meeting of the SBC.

Two former SBC presidents, Adrian Rogers of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, and W. A. Criswell of First Baptist Church, Dallas, preached sermons on the family and the church.

Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., was elected vice president.

SBC Foreign Mission Board president R. Keith Parks challenged pastors to support Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's program to proclaim the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

Parks said if Baptists succeed in Bold Mission Thrust, it will be largely because of the support of pastors; but if Baptists fail, there will be "more blood on the hands of pastors" than anyone else.

Educators focus: the '80s

The 1980s will be full of stress but understanding the changes that produce stress can make religious educators more effective during the coming decade, participants at the 26th annual Southern Baptist Religious Education Association were told at a two-day meeting.

The SBREA met prior to the Southern Baptist Convention and looked at how to equip themselves, their families and churches for the 1980s.

"God has given us, not so much the colors of a picture, as he has given us the colors of a palette," Edward Lindaman, president emeritus of Whitworth College, Spokane, Wash., told the closing session. "The uncertainty of the future is an asset, not a liability. We will never be free until we are uncertain, because then we experience in a real sense that God is change. And God works through change."

J. Earl Mead of Dallas, an 89-year-old religious educator, received the distinguished leader award. He was minister of education at Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas in 1926-62 and presently is ambassador at large at Cliff Temple.

Elaine Dickson of Nashville was chosen president elect for 1982 and first vice president for 1981. She is manager of the direct sales department of the Sunday School Board.

Officers elected include Charles Gwaltney, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La., president; Bruce Powers, professor of education and administration, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., second vice president; Bill Ballou, minister of education and administration, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Tex., third vice president; Marvin Myers, a church administration consultant with the Sunday School Board, secretary-treasurer; and Ferris Jordan, professor of religious education, New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary, assistant secretary-treasurer.

Over 325 registered for the SBREA meeting.

Fundamental to SBC

The agonies he experienced before leading First Baptist Church, Van Nuys, Cal., into the Southern Baptist Convention were shared by Jess Moody, the church's pastor, at the Southern Baptist Pastor's Conference.

"I wish I could tell people who're stressing independent, hard fundamentalism they don't know what they're talking about," said Moody.

The eloquent, affable preacher said when he left First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, to become pastor of First Baptist, Van Nuys, in 1976, he entered one of the most agonizing periods of his ministry.

The independent Baptist church had a great evangelistic history and was one of the oldest super churches in the Los Angeles area. But it had been without a pastor for 1½ years and had become segmented.

When Moody became pastor of the independent Baptist Church in Van Nuys, it was supporting a number of missionaries.

"Such direct support of missionaries sounds fine until a church runs into financial difficulties," said Moody. "I spent many sleepless nights weeping over what would happen to our missionaries, and no one to help me," he recalls. "Also, there were so many agencies seeking our support that we had to maintain a board like the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to hear all the people who came."

So Moody set about training church members in the way Southern Baptists support 5000 missionaries consistently through the Cooperative Program.

But when the church voted on whether to join the Southern Baptist Convention, said Moody, some of the members who had left came back to vote. The move to become Southern Baptist lost by a small margin.

During the next year and a half Moody led the church to see how Southern Baptists support missionaries in 94 countries. Because First Baptist, Van Nuys, was already supporting missionaries in a half dozen nations, their theme became "The Church of a Hundred Nations."

About a year ago, when the church voted on cooperating by giving through the Cooperative Program, the measure passed by about 900 to 13.

Now First Baptist, Van Nuys, gives 20 percent of its mission budget through the Cooperative Program and has voted to raise that to a third of the mission budget next year. Their goal for the following year is 50 percent.

Moody said First Baptist, Van Nuys, had the maximum 10 messengers at every session of the Southern Baptist Convention, and "they're so excited they've memorized the Book of Reports."

Korean speaks to wives

Women attending the 26th annual Conference of Ministers' Wives were treated to the stirring recollection of a former Korean Christian schoolteacher who was imprisoned during World War II for confronting Japanese imperialist leaders responsible for the harassment and torture of her Christian countrymen.

Mrs. Esther Ahn Kim, wife of a South Korean Baptist pastor, of Los Angeles recounted, "The Lord vividly instructed me to go to Japan in 1939 to warn its leaders of God's judgment upon their nation which I felt would be a rain of brimstone fire."

Installed as conference officers were Mrs. J. Allen Kirkpatrick, Fountain Valley, Cal., president; Mrs. Russell McIntire, New Orleans, La., vice president; Mrs. J. W. L. Adams Jr., Texarkana, Ark., secretary-treasurer; and Mrs. Kaye Glazener, Little Rock, Ark., corresponding secretary.

Elected to serve in 1983 were Mrs. Frank Pollard, San Antonio, Tex., president; Mrs. Ellis Bush, Harrisburg, Pa., vice president; Mrs. Harold Combs, Tallahassee, Fla., secretary-treasurer; and Mrs. T. M. Collins Jr., High Point, N. C., corresponding secretary.

Outgoing officers included Mrs. James Graves, St. Petersburg, Fla., president; Mrs. Don Kim, Los Angeles, vice president; Mrs. Floyd Roebuck, Rome, Ga., secretary-treasurer; and Mrs. John Wright, Little Rock, Ark., corresponding secretary.

Convention leaves mark

Tim Hedquist, assistant to the treasurer and director of financial planning for the SBC Executive Committee, said the 124th annual meeting will cost approximately \$109,000 for facilities and preparation.

Even with increased costs for transportation and shipping, this year's SBC cost less than the three previous ones because of smaller registration, Hedquist said.

The Los Angeles Convention and Tourist Bureau estimates Southern Baptist messengers left more than \$7 million in the local coffers. The SBC is one of the top five conventions to come to Los Angeles this year in terms of money spent and the number of registrants.

Hedquist said Los Angeles is one of the more inexpensive cities to host the SBC, even though transportation costs were higher. He added fewer family members attended this year's meeting, probably because of transportation costs.

WMU elects lady Dr.

Meeting in a county which represents a microcosm of the world's population, 3000 Southern Baptist women spent two days hearing challenges to expand their concept of world missions.

The women, participants in the 93rd annual meeting of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, elected Mrs. Dorothy Sample of Flint, Mich., as national president and Mrs. Betty Gilreath of Charlotte, N. C., as recording secretary.

Mrs. Sample, wife of Richard Sample, a bivocational pastor and educator, holds two earned doctorates. She succeeded Mrs. A. Harrison Gregory of Danville, Va., who has held WMU's top elective office six years. Dr. Sample is a psychological counselor and educator.

Mrs. Gilreath, a homemaker and former WMU president in North Carolina, succeeds Mrs. William Ellis of Shelbyville, Ky. Mrs. Gilreath is a current member of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

Keynoting the WMU meeting, Charles W. Bryan of Richmond, Va., challenged his listeners to expand their concept of missions by "opening windows on a larger world."

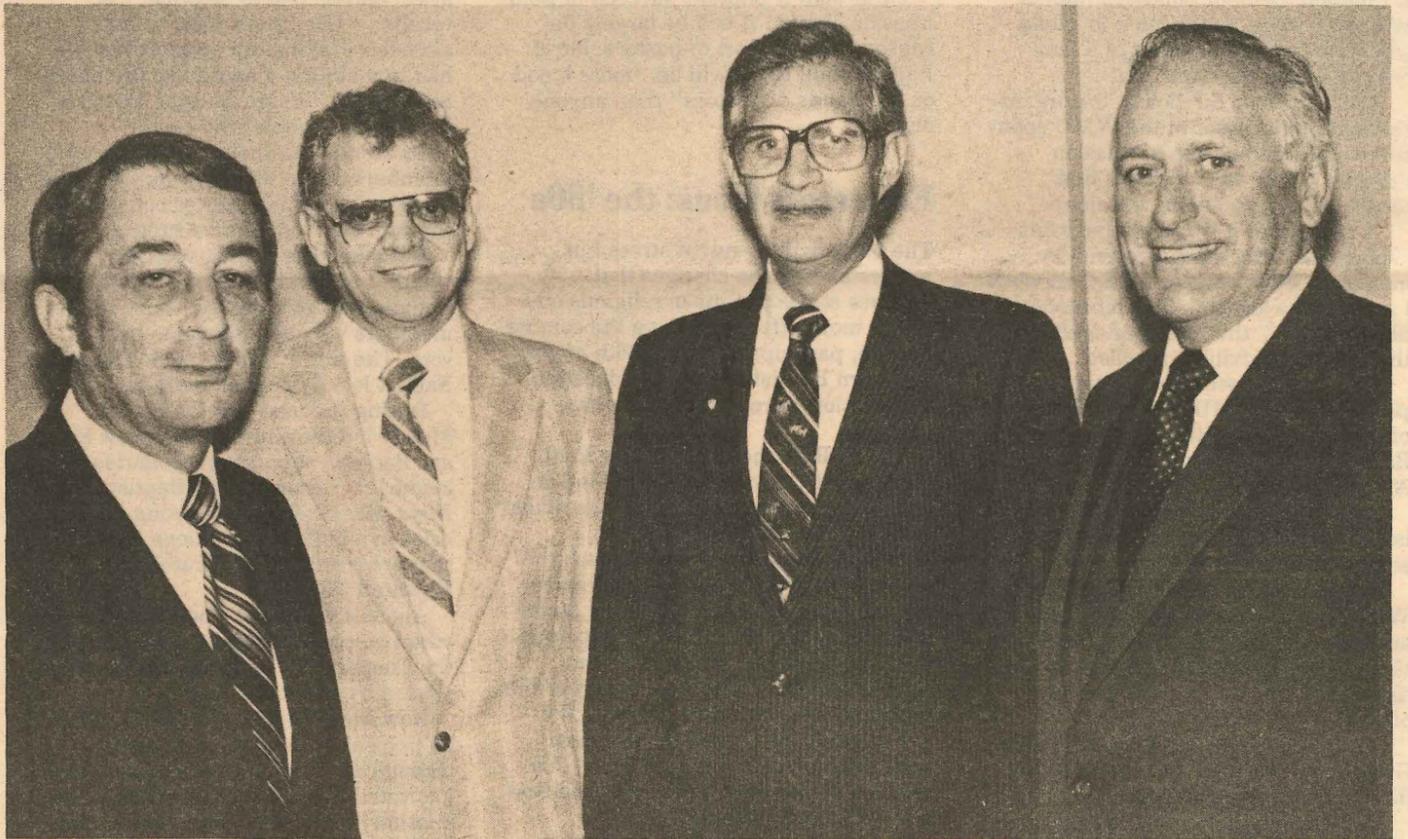
Bryan, vice president for overseas operations for the SBC Foreign Mission Board, said Christian missions has entered a new day which demands an expanded world view, a recognition of change and a boldness to respond.

Bryan urged the women to pray specifically, listen to God's challenge to go as missionaries and give support to the efforts of Southern Baptists in 94 countries.



SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION OFFICERS: [l-r] Bailey Smith, pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., president; Christine Gregory, Danville, Va., first vice president; and Don Kim, pastor, Berendo Street Baptist Church, Los Angeles, Cal., second vice president.

Southern goes



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS: [l-r] J. Howard Cobble, Avondale Estates, Ga., chairman; John T. Dunaway, Corbin, Ky., vice chairman; Donald I. Gent, Evansville, Ind., secretary; and Harold C. Bennett, Nashville, executive secretary-treasurer.



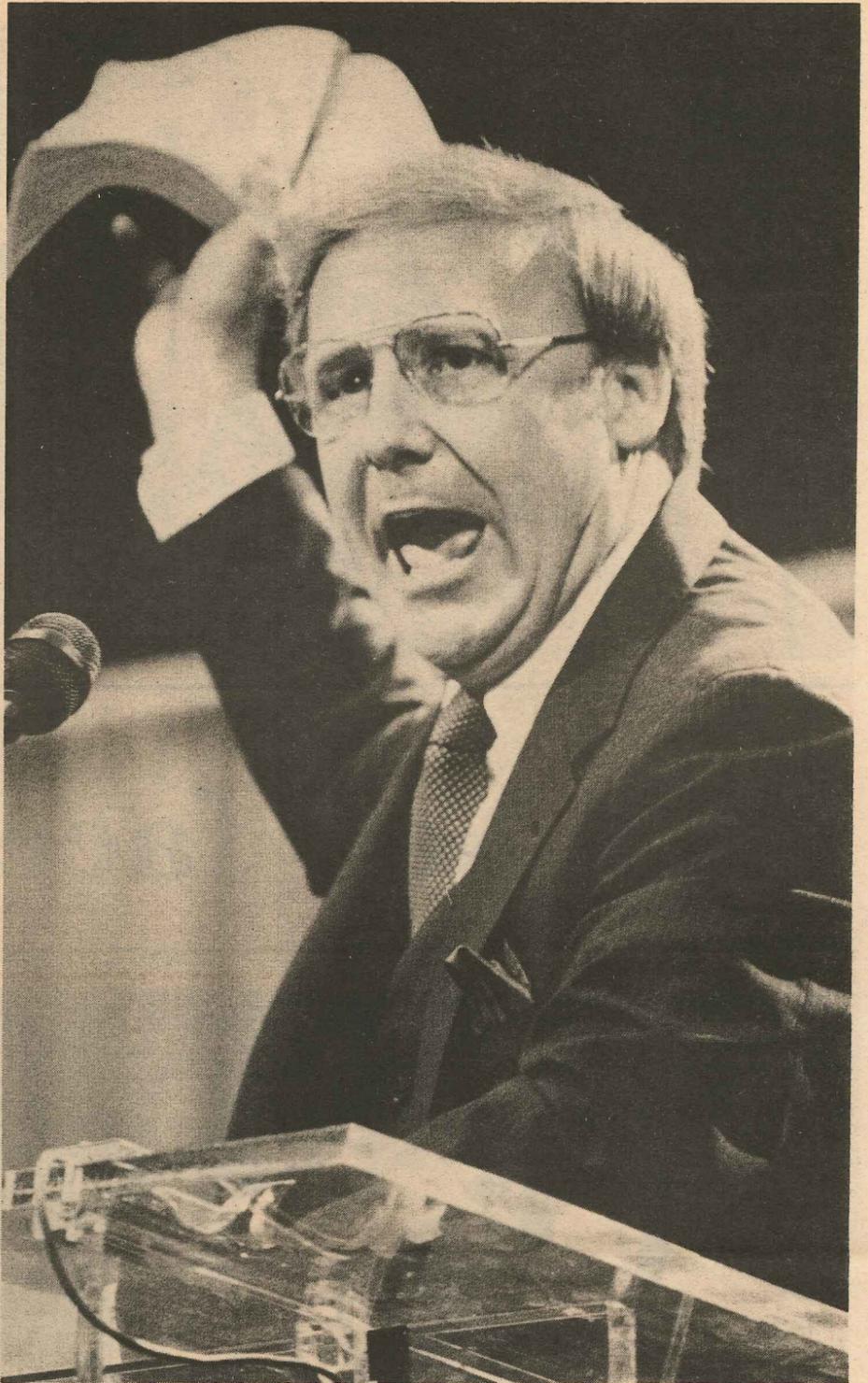
The first group of black Baptists staffed registration facilities for the convention. Some 34 members of St. Stephens Baptist Church, La Puente, Cal. registered messengers.



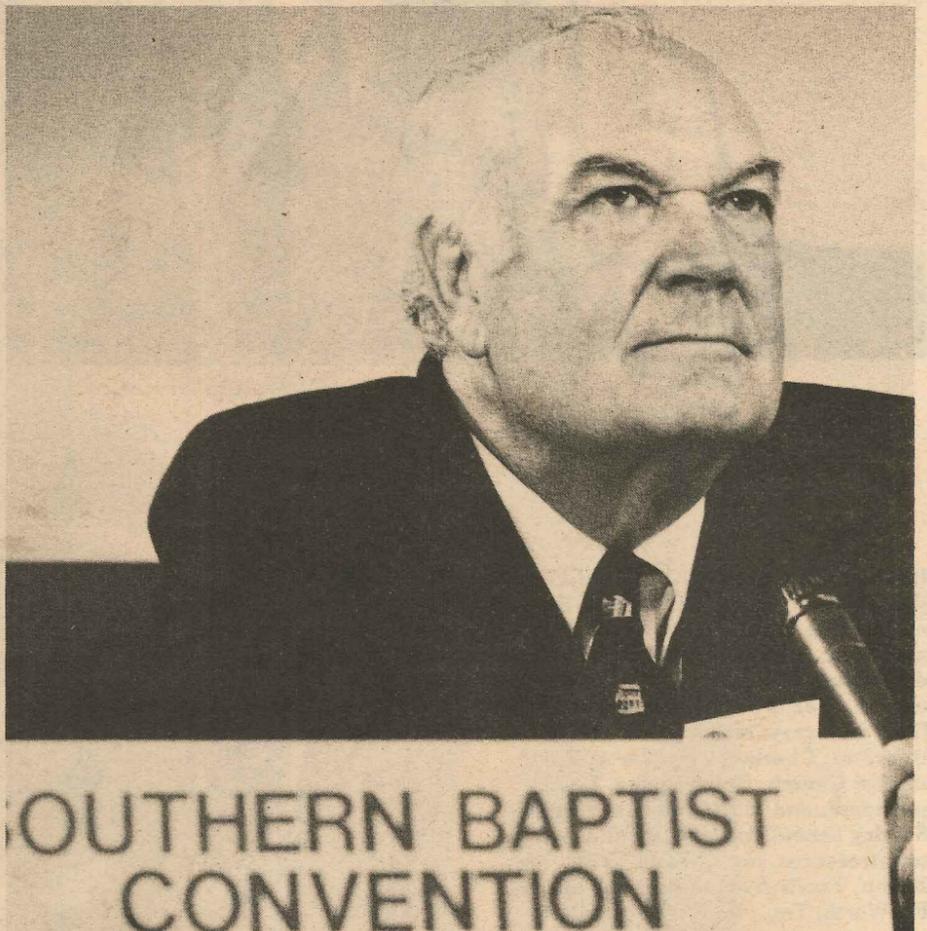
"Our Bold Response... NOW!"

Bailey E. Smith of Del City, Okla., president of the SBC, proclaimed "evangelizing the world by the year 2000 is not a dream but a promise," as he delivered his presidential address.

Baptist Convention west . . .



Allison Griffin, 17, [1], First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla., and Michele Cherry, 17, First Baptist Church, Washington, N. C., were two of the first six girl pages at this year's convention. This was the first year girls served as SBC pages.



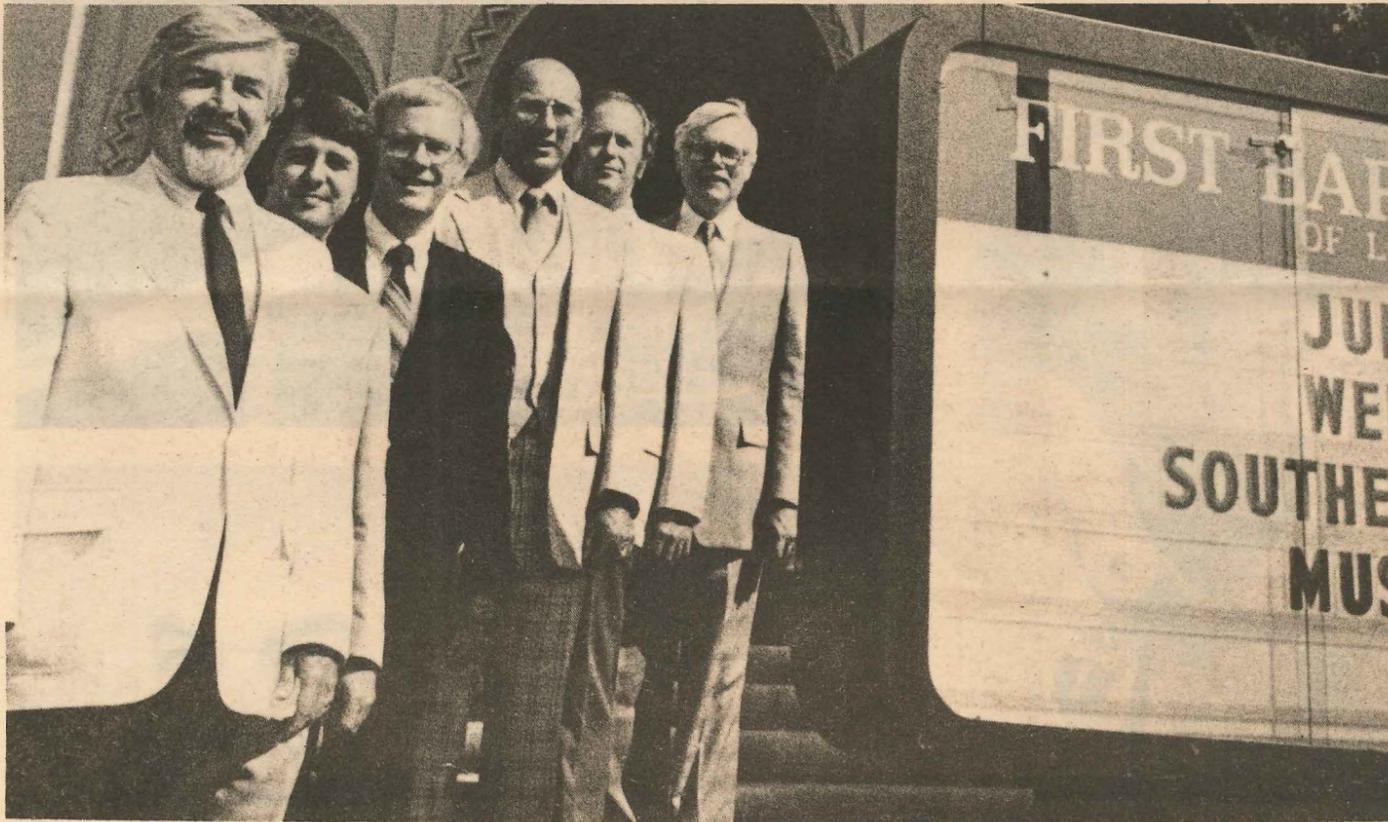
Abner V. McCall, chancellor and retired president of Baylor University, Waco, Tex., said he never expected to defeat incumbent Bailey Smith in the bid for president of the convention.



PASTOR'S CONFERENCE OFFICERS: [l-r] Kenneth Wayne Fields extends his congratulations to Ed Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston, Tex., president; and Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hills Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., vice president.

ASSOCIATES:
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New faces lead SBC group



CHURCH MUSIC OFFICERS: [l-r] Fes Robertson, Church Music Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., president-elect; Ron Bostic, Wingate College, Wingate, N. C., editor; Truitt Roberts, First Baptist Church, Starkville, Miss., eastern council member, local church division; John McGuckin, California Southern Baptist General Convention, western council member, denominational division; R. Wayne Stacks, First Baptist Church, Lompoc, Cal., western council member, local church division; and Hugh McElrath, Southern Seminary, Louisville, eastern council member, educational division. Not pictured: Al Washburn, Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Cal., president.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICERS: [l-r] Bruce Powers, Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N. C., second vice president; Elaine Dickson, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, president-elect; C. Ferris Jordan, New Orleans [La.] Seminary, assistant secretary-treasurer; Charles F. Gwaltney, First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La., president; and Marvin Myers, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, secretary-treasurer. Not pictured: Bill Ballou, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Tex., third vice president.



ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS OFFICERS: [l-r] Cline Boyers, Shelby, N. C., president; William R. Moyle, Tampa, Fla., president-elect; J. D. Passmore, Morning, Ark., secretary; Nolan Johnson, New Orleans, La., host director; and Daniel F. Page, Greenville, S. C., editor. Not pictured: David L. Morgan, Mauma, Ariz., treasurer.



ps . . .



WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION OFFICERS: [l-r] Miss Carolyn Weatherford, Birmingham, Ala., executive director; Dr. Dorothy Elliott Sample, Ainsworth Baptist Church, Flint, Mich., president; and Mrs. Betty Gilreath, St. John's Baptist Church, Charlotte, N. C., recording secretary.

MINISTERS' WIVES OFFICERS: [l-r] Mrs. Russell McIntire, Oak Park Baptist Church, New Orleans, La., vice-president; Mrs. J. Allen Kirkpatrick, First Southern Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., corresponding secretary; and Mrs. J. W. L. Adams, Beach Street First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Ark., secretary-treasurer.





Convention president and Mrs. Bailey Smith

Baptists pass motions on issues

Speaking to a wide range of public issues, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention adopted resolutions denouncing the Equal Rights Amendment, secular humanism and anti-Semitism, while upholding religious liberty and the need for both peace and a strong national defense.

Other resolutions condemned providing contraceptives to minors without parental consent, the quality of television programming, pornography and violence in the cities.

Messengers to the convention also urged support for the mentally handicapped and the American Bible Society.

In all, 18 resolutions were adopted by the convention the last two days.

Resolutions committee chairman Charles Graves, pastor of Nichols Hills Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla., expressed satisfaction at the relative calm which prevailed in debate this year as contrasted with the often acrimonious tone of discussion last year in St. Louis.

While resolutions passed at annual meetings of the SBC express the views of messengers present and voting, they have no binding effect on congregations or individual Baptists. Yet they are considered an important barometer of the mood of the denomination and provide messengers an opportunity to speak their minds.

Notable for their absence this year were proposals on abortion and prayer in public schools, two subjects which in recent convention sessions have provoked heated debate. Also expected but not presented was a resolution on the teaching of "creationism" in public schools.

Debate was spirited on a resolution on the role of women in society, particularly a section opposing the Equal Rights Amendment.

The action opposing the embattled proposal reaffirmed a position first taken last year. The amendment has been ratified by 35 states, three short of those required to amend the Constitution.

An apparent turning point in debate came when Mrs. Joyce Rogers of Memphis, wife of the immediate past president of the convention, made an impassioned plea for adoption of the resolution containing the anti-ERA language. Mrs. Rogers, along with her husband Adrian, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, have been active during the past two years in a variety of conservative social crusades.

In reaffirming its traditional support for religious liberty and separation of church and state, the convention took a swipe at the religious right and went on record as opposed to current efforts in Congress to enact a tuition tax bill for parents of children attend-

ing sectarian schools.

Messengers overwhelmingly adopted an amendment to the committee resolution by W. W. Finlator of Raleigh, N. C., aimed at the religious right. It urged the SBC to "deplore and reject the arrogation of the right of any group to define and pronounce for all people what is the Christian faith, and to seek through political means to impose this faith upon the American people under a government which is mandated to safeguard God and respect the people of all religions and no religion."

The statement deploring anti-Semitism acknowledged a "common heritage of persecution and suffering for conscience sake" shared by Baptists and Jews and commended SBC president Bailey E. Smith of Del City, Okla., and other denominational leaders "as they seek sincere friendship and meaningful dialog with our Jewish neighbors."

No mention was made of two widely publicized comments Smith made about Jews last year.

In spite of efforts to delete references to national defense needs in a statement on peace and national security the convention adopted the committee resolution expressing both "our longing for world peace" and "the necessity of defense preparedness that will serve as a deterrent to war."

A statement on family planning, including opposition to contraceptives for minors, passed easily after considerable debate. Both information and birth control devices should be provided by families rather than the government, messengers declared.

Two Southern Baptist agencies, the Radio and Television Commission and the Christian Life Commission, were commended for their efforts to improve the quality of television programming. The resolution also condemned "a proliferation of profanity, violence, sex, alcohol, drug abuse and marital infidelity" presently shown on television and expressed opposition to removal of the public interest standard as the basis for television regulation by the Federal Communications Commission.

A resolution calling attention to growing violence in American cities specifically mentioned kidnapped and murdered children and young adults in Atlanta, calling the Atlanta situation "a tragic siren in the night of our national apostasy."

In a statement some observers thought might occasion debate, messengers commended the New York-based American Bible Society. Some debate was expected objecting to remarks made at a Southern Baptist meeting in April by ABS Bible translator Robert Bratcher disparaging the view that the Bible is without error. Bratcher resigned his position earlier last week.

My first convention

by Jimmy Hester

I would imagine attending any Southern Baptist Convention carries with it anticipation, excitement and a sense of expectancy. But if the convention is your first and you travel 3000 miles to attend, the anticipation and excitement are multiplied.

Since my childhood I have studied of Southern Baptists in my church and later in college and seminary. I have read of historic meetings in crucial years when Southern Baptists came together in annual session to discuss and chart their mission. As I studied and read I often imagined what it would be like to be present. This year my opportunity materialized and I attended my first Southern Baptist Convention.

What I saw in Los Angeles was not totally unexpected. I had heard reports from those attending of the way messengers walked the aisles not to make a decision but to disturb the proceedings. I had heard of the hallway "politicizing" and the noise created by those socializing in adjacent corridors. I had been told of the inspiring reports of convention boards and agencies as they told of our convention's work. All of these expectations were confirmed in Los Angeles.

I suppose the movement and noise are to be expected at a meeting of 13,000 plus persons. I was never concerned or bothered. Instead, it created an atmosphere of activity giving the impression Southern Baptists were a people about an important business. And they are.

The city of Los Angeles greeted messengers with open arms. As I moved from hotel to convention center, sought a place to eat or just walked the streets as a tourist, the people of Los Angeles were helpful and cordial. The fears of the big city were subsided as Los Angeles opened her arms and became a friendly, comfortable place to visit.

As a church administrator, I was impressed with those in charge of the order of business. On several occasions the convention's business sessions ran into lengthy discussion and debate. President Bailey Smith and those on the platform always managed to get the session on track and complete all business of the session.

Messengers to the convention gave the impression the election of officers and handling of administrative business was the most important task of the convention. My greatest disappointment was the attendance on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings when the heart of Southern Baptist work was presented: foreign and home missions. The convention center was half full as messengers listened to presentations by the foreign and home mission boards. Earlier in the day rooms had to be set up to handle the overflow crowd.

Southern Baptists are actively involved in Bold Mission Thrust. Messengers gave the impression this was not of primary importance. But the reports from every agency and board proclaimed Southern Baptists over the nation and around the world are involved in a great way.

The announcement of the retirement of Dr. Duke McCall at Southern Seminary was a moving and historical moment in the life of the convention. To witness such a moment is a privilege not afforded many. The contribution of Dr. McCall to the convention has been tremendous. His retirement ends an era in Southern Baptist life. Although I regret his retirement, I thank God I could share this moment in the life of the convention.

My first convention was more than I expected not because of the size or the vastness of the work done by Southern Baptists. It was more than I expected because of the power and sense of direction I felt from the Holy Spirit as Southern Baptists got on about the business of reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

Jimmy Hester, a former Western Recorder staff writer, is currently minister of education and administration at First Baptist Church, Florence, S. C. He assisted the staff in producing this convention issue of Western Recorder.

Christian Education

Two deans named at Georgetown College

Two deans have been named at Georgetown College, according to Ben M. Elrod, president.

Joe O. Lewis, chairman of the religion department since 1974, has been named academic dean and Louise Treadwell will be dean of women.

Lewis, a native of Waco, Tex., has been acting academic dean during 1980-81. He is a graduate of Southeast Missouri College and Southern Seminary. He has done post graduate work at New York and Tel Aviv universities and the University of Kentucky.

A member of several professional organizations, Lewis has served as presi-

dent of the Association of Baptist Professors of Religion.

Mrs. Treadwell has worked as a staff member of state Baptist conventions in Kentucky and Tennessee and was a visiting instructor at Southern Seminary in 1979.

A native of Paragould, Ark., Mrs. Treadwell attended Furman and Union universities before graduating from Brenau College. She has a master's degree from Converse College.

Mrs. Treadwell's husband, Bill, is pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Georgetown.

Cumberland outreach raises, sends more

Records were set in several missions areas by Cumberland College during the past academic year, according to Jim Wilson, campus ministries director.

Cumberland students raised \$11,780 for missions work, a record sum. The majority of this is being used to finance 51 summer missionaries serving in 14 states and six overseas assignments.

In addition 61 youth led revival teams and 11 spring vacation missions teams were sent by the school for a record number of outreach teams.

Other specialty groups from Cumberland's Baptist Student Union and its affiliates are conducting numerous outreach ministries, Wilson said.

Love in Action, an Appalachian community ministry, will conduct 12 vacation Bible schools this summer as well as operate a continuous ministry in various communities throughout the year.

Sunesis, a contemporary singing group, performed in more than 100 churches, high schools and conferences over the last year.

According to Wilson, Cumberland's student ministries reach out to the youth, elderly, culturally disadvantaged, mentally handicapped and others unable to participate in more traditional Christian services.

building improvements and scholarships.

Regional groups of alumni, trustees, faculty, staff and friends of the college have formed to generate pledges in their own areas.

Bert Sparrow, Louisville surgeon and Campbellsville College graduate, is chairman of the Greater Louisville Diamond Jubilee Campaign series.

Sparrow said, "My hope is that this fund raising campaign will help to keep this excellent small Christian college in operation for the sake of future classes of young people from all parts of the country."



O. M. Kingston Jr. of Madisonville, a trustee of Golden Gate Seminary, talks with student Joe Blaylock, also a Kentucky native. The two met at an informal reception sponsored by Golden Gate students for seminary trustees who were on campus recently for their annual meeting.

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Campbellsville fund drive totals \$400,000 to date

Gifts and pledges to Campbellsville College's Diamond Jubilee Campaign total more than \$400,000, one-fifth the campaign goal of \$2 million.

The goal, as determined by an extensive survey conducted in 1979, includes funds for sustaining current programs,

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Cumberland College Development Program's Continuing Education Series.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Personnel

Atchleys to serve Williamsburg youth Benny and Becky Atchley have joined the staff of First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, as youth coordinators.

Atchley is a Cumberland College senior majoring in religious education. Mrs. Atchley, a Hazard native, is a first grade teacher in McCreary County.

Edwards to join Northside staff Northside Baptist Church of Winchester has called Owen Edwards as pastor. He comes from a seven-year pastorate at Kirksville Baptist Church of Richmond.

Whitesburg FBC adds two to staff First Baptist Church, Whitesburg, recently called two staff members.

Rebecca Martin will be director of education and youth and Yvonne Clark will be director of music and youth.

A graduate of East Tennessee State University, Miss Martin earned the master's of religious education from Southern Seminary in 1979.

Miss Clark also graduated from Southern Seminary in 1979 with a master of church music degree. She, too, is a graduate of East Tennessee State University.

Both are leaving positions at Oak Hill Baptist Academy in Virginia.

Perkins leaves Williamsburg David W. Perkins ended his four-year service as pastor of First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, May 31.

Perkins will be an assistant professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where he earned the ThD in New Testament in 1977.

Newport FBC calls Bostick First Baptist Church, Newport, has called Clyde V. Bostick to be part time minister of music.

The Tennessee native and Southern Seminary School of Church Music graduate will begin his service June 17.

He and his wife, Susan, have been serving in a similar position at the Delhi Hills Baptist Church in Cincinnati.

Hedrick moves to Mt. Vernon FBC Charles Hedrick resigned as pastor of Central Baptist Church of Maysville to accept the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon.

A graduate of Campbellsville College, New Orleans Seminary and Luther Rice Seminary, Hedrick served Central Baptist for eight years.

He will take the Mt. Vernon position July 1.

Haun to be full time at Davis Memorial Larry Haun has accepted a call to become full time minister of education and youth at Louisville's Davis Memorial Baptist Church, Long Run Association.

He has been in the position on a part time basis since May 1980 and served there in 1976-77 while he was a Southern Seminary student.

Haun is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and Southern Seminary, and is working on a master's degree in special education at the University of Louisville.

Gray to be Long Branch pastor Tom Gray has recently begun service to as pastor to Long Branch Baptist Church, Laurel River Association.

Simpkins moves to South Fork pastorate Bob Simpkins, pastor of Forest Hills Baptist Church, Pike Association, has resigned to accept the pastorate of South Fork Baptist Church, Lynn Association.

Congregations

Oak Grove FBC burns building note First Baptist Church of Oak Grove recently conducted a note burning ceremony to celebrate retirement of a note on its present building.

The congregation is now planning construction of a 8,534 square foot educational building.

John R. Walker is pastor.

Loyal FBC members attend conference Ten youth and two adults of First Baptist Church of Loyal, Upper Cumberland Association, attended the Sunrise East Youth Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina.

This is the third consecutive year the church's youth have participated in the program.

Yvonne Clark



Rebecca Martin



Charles Hedrick

Keith Rogers is pastor and Brenda Rogers is youth director of the church.

Fairlane builds parsonage Fairlane Baptist Church, Northern Kentucky Association, has completed its first parsonage for pastor John R. Holloway, a 1959 graduate of Clear Creek Baptist School.

The four bedroom house was built last fall for \$50,000. Much of the labor was done by the church membership.

Somerset church dedicates sanctuary Beacon Hill Baptist Church of Somerset dedicated its sanctuary May 17.

The octagonal building which seats 850 people was designed and built by Steve Danzinger of Louisville. Building and furnishings cost more than one-half million dollars.

Bays Fork has homecoming Bays Fork Baptist Church, Allen Association, had homecoming services June 7.

The sermon by Raymond Jones was followed by an afternoon of gospel singing. The Faith Singers of Edmon-ton were guest performers.

Farmdale is new Frankfort church Farmdale Baptist Church of Frankfort had its constitution service May 24 to initiate worship in the recently-gathered congregation.

Malcolm Lunceford, pastor of Frankfort's Immanuel Baptist Church, presided over the service in which Frank Owens preached.

Barry L. Bellue is the church's pastor.

Blue Ball has record attendance Blue Ball Baptist Church, Severns Valley Association, recently had 114 people in Sunday school, the highest attendance recorded at the church in 20 years.

Edgewood to begin major expansion Edgewood Baptist Church in Nicholasville, Elkhorn Association, has begun a major expansion plan.

Ground will soon be broken for an educational building to provide additional classrooms, a suite of offices and service rooms. The present structure built in 1971 will be renovated to expand the sanctuary.

Work is expected to be completed late this year.

Mt. Pleasant youth to be on mission Youth from Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Logan County Association, will make a one-week summer mission tour to the Lake of the Ozarks area of Missouri.

They will be conducting backyard Bible clubs, personal evangelism and lakeside revival services.

They received the assignment for the church's first summer mission trip through the Home Mission Board.



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Barb Hiltz



Valerie Ennis

Clio FBC members to go to Barbados
Two members of First Baptist Church of Clio will be members of a group of young missionaries from Michigan and Ohio who will work three weeks in Barbados this summer.

Valerie Ennis, 15, and Barb Hiltz, 18, are part of "project serve" which is organized by Youth for Christ. They will help build an orphanage for handicapped children, do domestic chores in their camp and interact with people in the area.

Barbados is an island 250 miles off the coast of Venezuela.

Central's attendance peaks at 823
Central Baptist Church of Corbin reported an average of 613 persons in Sunday school attendance throughout its recent 10-week attendance campaign.

That figure is 126 more than attended the same time last year.

The campaign's climax was May 3 when attendance reached 823, the highest in the 60-year history of the church.

Highview leads state in study requests
For the second consecutive year Highview Baptist Church, Long Run Association, has led Kentucky in Baptist doctrine study requests with requests for 82 people.

The church also led Kentucky in all subject areas of the church study course system for Kentucky Baptists with 297 requests.

Oaklawn celebrates 50 years
All former pastors of Oaklawn Baptist Church, Paducah, will be present at the 50th anniversary celebration June 28.

Revivals

Walters leads Temple Hill revival
Temple Hill Baptist Church, Monroe Association, had revival services May 8-10 resulting in six professions of faith and one rededication.

Pete Walters was evangelist. Mike Thomason is pastor.

Two decisions made at Sidney revival
The April revival at Sidney Baptist Church, Pike Association, resulted in two professions of faith and baptisms into church membership.

Munfordville has May revival
Lonnie Turner, missionary to Zambia, was evangelist for the May revival at Munfordville Baptist Church, Lynn Association.

Leitchfield Crossing has revival
Leitchfield Crossing Baptist Church, Lynn Association, reported seven professions of faith made during its recent revival.

Murphy leads Mt. Pisgah revival
Keith Murphy was evangelist for the weekend revival May 15-17 at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, Lynn Association.

NKU team leads Grace revival
Grace Baptist Church, Northern Kentucky Association, was led in weekend revival May 22-24 by the Baptist Student Union team from Northern Kentucky University which includes evangelist Fred Hockney, music director Tim Mitchell, pianist Kim Henderson and fellowship director Terry Justus.

GEORGETOWN COLLEGE



announces its third annual Youth Choir Day Saturday, October 3

- For Baptist Youth Choirs [Junior and Senior High Levels]

- Complimentary Lunch for Participants and Chaperones

- Complimentary Admission to the Football Game for Participants and Chaperones

- Free and Ample Parking [special places reserved for church buses and vans]

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W. Wayne Johnson will direct the campus rehearsals and performance. Participating choirs should purchase and rehearse these songs in advance:

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Sam Fox - XCX 259
3. ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS -
arr. Harry Simeone
Shawnee Press

9:00 - 10:00
Registration at Lee E. Cralle Student Center

10:00 - 11:00
Rehearsal in John L. Hill Chapel

11:15 - 12:15
Rehearsal in Hinton Football Stadium

12:15 - 1:00
Complimentary Picnic Lunch

1:30
Football Game Begins
[Georgetown vs. Northwood]

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Georgetown College
Georgetown, KY 40324

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JUNE 28, 1981

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Through John God assured believers in Christ, who were subjected to persecution because of their Christian faith, that in his own time he would see to it that his eternal purpose in Christ would be carried to its ultimate consummation and they would enjoy the eternal bliss of the redeemed in heaven.

The new creation—Revelation 21:1-7 In these verses is a splendid description of the great joy which is in store for the children of God in their future abode. As Christians we are looking forward with great anticipation to that day when we shall be delivered from the power and presence of sin. When we shall enter upon our inheritance and drink to the full from the fountain of the water of life, all of the things which have caused us so much pain, distress and sorrow will have passed away and we shall be in a new state wherein dwelleth righteousness and peace and nothing shall mar the bliss of that marvelous place. Then the abolition of sin, sickness, suffering and sorrow will have become an absolute reality. These glorious words of assurance from the eternal God have been the comfort of his people during their darkest hours. Let us believe and rely upon them as we journey through this life for nothing can prevent their fulfillment. To God's children who are now residing in this world of sin, sickness, suffering, separation and sorrow, many of whom are weary with the march of life, these blessed words in verse four fall like an indescribable benediction upon them as they contemplate being with their Lord forever.

In presenting himself the glorified Christ identified himself as God, whose peculiar title is "Alpha and Omega," or "the first and the last," inasmuch as "Alpha" is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and "Omega" is the last letter in it. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of creation—having created all that is out of nothing (John 1:3); of the Bible—for he appears from Genesis to Revelation; of history—the centuries before his birth in Bethlehem were a preparation for his advent and those which followed have recorded his triumphs; and Christ is the Alpha and Omega of salvation—"the author and finisher of our faith."

The new city—Revelation 21:22-25 For a full description of this celestial city one should read chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation. Though one may not be able to understand and explain all of the symbolism recorded, he is made to rejoice in the wonders of the place to which by God's grace he and the other Christians are going.

In this new and holy city there will not be any need of a temple, a place which has been dedicated and set apart for God's habitation, because the presence and all-pervasive glory of the Lord will make it a sanctuary. Neither will there be any need of the sun or the moon for he who is now the light of the world will then illuminate the celestial city. The eternal and ineffable God will manifest himself in the Lamb who is the light of the city. Then, as now, the invisible God will become visible only in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fact that the names of Christians have been recorded in the Lamb's book of life and that they will enter the blessed portals of this city of absolute purity and complete holiness should result in their living more godly lives here and in their being more earnest and faithful in their service for the Lord.

EXPERIENCING GOD'S PRESENCE

International Series

Deuteronomy 5:32-40 Deut. 4 contains Moses' earnest exhortations to obedience to God, his warning of divine judgment for disobedience and the promise of divine blessing for obedience, along with the patriarch's look at the past and to the future.

Never from the creation of the world, anywhere under heaven, had any people ever received such revelations from God as had the people of Israel. God's choice of them involved them in a special responsibility. He wanted to impress upon them the solemn duty that was theirs because of God's presence in their midst and because of his revealed will for their lives.

Moses reminded the Israelites that God the creator had spoken to them at Mount Sinai and that through the giving of the law God had sought to instruct his people. There is no evidence to indicate that any god had ever spoken as had the God of Israel. The purpose of God's presence in the voice from heaven and in his holy fire was that Israel might be instructed and that their knowledge of him would lead to such behavior on their part as would be pleasing to him. With their ears the Israelites had heard God's instructive voice issuing from the midst of the fire. The account of the miraculous deliverance of more than 600,000 people from the midst of a powerful nation like Egypt without striking a blow proves that the God who performed this miracle was entirely different from the gods of the pagan world. God's bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt intact was an act of divine grace. Never before had any nation been taken from the midst of a more powerful nation through divine help as in the case of Israel becoming a nation in Egypt and then the entire nation was snatched from the clutches of the master nation. This act of grace toward the children of Israel was for the purpose of their imparting blessings to all the nations.

Moses reminded the Israelites that God had proved himself to be far superior to all other gods, none of which were worthy of being worshiped. He also reminded them of how God had spoken to them at Mount Sinai, delivered them from slavery in Egypt, performed great miracles before their eyes, driven the nations out of the Promised Land, given it to them as an inheritance and chosen them to prove to the world that he was supreme. Their knowledge of God's will and the possession of his commandments, statutes and judgments were granted that they might be obedient to him and magnify his name. As long as they were obedient to God things would go well with them and their children and they would enjoy great length of days.

Out of gratitude for what God has done, is doing and will yet do for us, let us cheerfully offer ourselves to him for the doing of his will. Our personal joy and the effectiveness of our Christian testimony are dependent upon our faithfulness to God.

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Clear Creek Comments

D.M. Aldridge, President
Clear Creek Baptist School
Pineville, Ky. 40977



30 years and growing

During the past several months I have discussed the ministry of Clear Creek Baptist School with you who read this column.

I am proud of our school, not just because of my close association with it over approximately 30 years, but because of many students and faculty/staff members who have so faithfully dedicated themselves to the institution, in their conviction that God's hand rests upon it in a special way.

Next June 15 will mark my retirement as president of this great hall of learning, and it is with a certain degree of sadness that I approach this event.

So many of you have sacrificially helped us provide one of the best biblical backgrounds possible anywhere in the world for ministerial students. It has been because of that regular support that we continue to exist. It is only because you do not forget us in your financial planning that we face the future with optimism.

You have perhaps already learned that Dr. Leon Simpson, an assistant pastor to Dr. W. S. Criswell, First Baptist Church, Dallas, will be my successor.

When Dr. Simpson accepted the task he wrote, "Clear Creek shall continue to offer the finest biblical and practical training possible for those who have answered God's call after reaching mature years. It shall continue to relate primarily to the Appalachian region and the various areas of Kentucky."

I shall never forget the many wonderful years I have served in the mountains of this area. Although I will leave next year for volunteer mission service under the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. My thoughts will forever remain here.

Your continued support is vital for us to remain the stalwart institution we have always been.

Dr. L. C. Kelly, the founder of our school, envisioned a great Baptist institution for the training of God-called persons. I am sure he never dreamed of the great advances that have been made. God surely blessed his efforts and brought to fruition the dreams of his youth.

KBC Activities

Here and now

JUNE 21
21 Father's Day

Looking ahead

JUNE
28 Christian Citizenship Sunday. Suggestions available from Cooperative Ministries: Christian Life Dept.

JULY
6-10 Mountain Missions Conference. Oneida Baptist Institute. Reservations through Oneida
12 Christian Literature Day
24 Kentucky Baptist Historical Society. Bowling Green, First Baptist Church

CONFERENCE AND CAMP DATES

Ridgecrest: Church Music June 20-26, Bible Preaching June 27-July 3, Foreign Missions July 4-10, Church Training Leadership/Youth July 11-17

Glorieta: Sunday School June 20-26, Sunday School June 27-July 3, Brotherhood/WMU July 4-10, Home Missions July 11-17

Cedarmore: (all full weeks are from 1 p.m. Monday to 1 p.m. Friday)
Acteens & GA's, Cedar Crest: Grades 4-12 June 22-26, Grades 4-12 June 29-July 3, Grades 4-12 July 6-10, Mother/Daughter Overnight July 10-11
RA's, Camp RABRO: Grades 4-12 June 22-26, Grades 4-12 June 29-July 3, Grades 4-12 July 6-10, Father/Son. Grades 1, 2, 3
Youth Camp: Youth Weeks are filled. A waiting list is available. June 22-26, June 29-July 3, July 6-10

Jonathan Creek: GA Camp June 29-July 3



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The Child Care, Clear Creek and Oneida columns are paid space.

Oneida Journal

Our daily challenge

Barkley Moore, President
Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972



Our summer school began Monday, June 8. We have 142 boys and girls enrolled in classes and 21 others are working eight-hour days on the farm, the grounds and in the dorms. Those students in class work 1-1½ hours daily. This is our eighth year to have a summer school program and this is by far the largest enrollment we have had.

A student can earn one full credit in summer school. Summer courses offered include: American history; Bible; English I, II, III, IV; math I, II; algebra and remedial math and reading. In the latter two courses we have a 1-4 teacher-student ratio.

Much of our dorm space is obligated in the summer for camps. We have a very heavy camp schedule this summer and the last camp will leave the day before the fall term begins Sunday, Aug. 9. Ours is a continuous program.

Having lost a dorm recently by fire we are already turning people away. Most of the weeks this summer we will have 40-50 campers sleeping on the floor in several classrooms at night. We will, however, be able to take care of the majority of our campers in beds.

Oneida's "word of mouth" reputation attracted students this past year from every part of Kentucky, 19 other states and 13 nations. What a mission challenge and opportunity! In this past academic year 169 of our boys and girls were convicted by the Holy Spirit and accepted Christ.

Every day we receive letters and phone calls and people come to visit as they look for a quality educational program for their children. Recently this letter came from Cherokee, N. C.: "Last week I sat by a couple at a dinner. They had nothing but praise about your school. Their son attends there. Could you send me some information? I am looking for a good school for my son, age 16."

This came from Middletown, Oh.: "I am a school counselor at John XXIII parochial school in Middletown. Recently I was talking to one of our eighth grade teachers regarding the future of one of our students here. In exploring possibilities for him, Iris mentioned your school. She couldn't speak highly enough of your school and, frankly, if Iris is an example of the kind of people you graduate, you have much to be proud of. The boy has made tremendous progress at school, but longstanding home problems and misunderstandings between he and his parents lead us to think Oneida might be a good place for him."

From Louisville, Ky., a mother writes: "A few years ago a group from Oneida came to my church to sing. A few of the boys spent the night in our home. Since that time I have been doing quite a bit of thinking about Oneida. I have four sons and I have seen quite a lot of change in the school system because of the low morals of many students and some of the teachers. I have the deepest concern for my 12-year-old who will be in the seventh grade next year. How does one go about having their child received into Oneida?"

From Reading, Pa., comes this letter: "Oneida has been recommended as an excellent school by my brother-in-law. Oneida has caught my attention because the leadership has been highly recommended, and also your work type program, and emphasis on morals."

Our work is needed and we need your help to meet the many challenges about us.

Frank Owen



Decisive times

There is no such thing as the Southern Baptist Church. Such terminology is fitting when speaking of some denominations but not for Baptists. Church, to Baptists, is the local congregation. Final authority resides in each local church.

The autonomous, local churches voluntarily relate together, in loose, unauthoritative bodies known as associations and conventions. Traditionally, none of these general bodies have been authoritative and they don't function as church. The Convention has been a sort of missionary society for sharing together in world-wide witness and service. We have no creed, no book of discipline and no central authority.

The current Southern Baptist trend toward creedalism and doctrinal authority is an historical test of whether a large, voluntary religious democracy like ours can hold together in its purpose without creedal authority.

We are big and widely scattered now, like the Northern Baptist Convention was when it broke up. The current trend is to disallow diversity among cooperating Christians and churches. I believe the great body of our people will back away from this as they realize it leads to a creed and central authority.

Previously our common commitment to world missions (not creed or authority) has been our strongest bond of union. A majority of messengers attending recent conventions are calling for authority to supervise doctrine. This is a departure from our history. The 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" statement is being used more like a creed. Still tighter creed-like demands are being worded to lay upon fellow believers.

One is reminded of some words in President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "... testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure." You and I as Baptists are seeing a crucially important historical test whether our denomination, or any denomination, "so conceived and so dedicated," can keep fellowship on the basis of our common task, without creed or central authority which free-spirited Baptists have always rejected.

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